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## THE EXTENT TO WHICH THE NAVY OF THE UNITED STATES SHOULD BE INCREASED

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I was unexpectedly and somewhat suddenly assigned the honor of representing the Secretary of the Navy on this occasion, and while such distinction is much appreciated by me, my only regret is that I am hardly prepared to do justice to the great and important subject assigned to me.

The necessity of a navy of some sort has been apparent ever since the birth of this country, but there have been times in its history when the navy struggled for its existence and when it even almost ceased to exist. Doubt about the importance of maintaining a considerable navy is a thing of the past. The history of the world, and particularly the history of these United States for the past seventy-five years, is sufficient to establish beyond all doubt, not only the necessity but the great importance of the maintenance of a navy, and a navy commensurate with the wealth and power of this republic, taking into consideration its relations with other great world powers.

A brief resumé of the history of the United States navy, based upon important epochs of the nation's history, may be stated as follows:

*First.*—Its provisional establishment by the Continental Congress for the Revolutionary War.

*Second.*—Its practical abolishment by the so-called peace establishment when the navy was considered by the power that then existed, no longer necessary, until the necessity for a navy became apparent with our first international troubles, which led to the Tripolitan War, resulted in its re-establishment and the hurried building of six frigates and the laying of the keel of the Constitution in 1794. In the Tripolitan War the navy of the United States made

a great record for itself. It may here be stated that in this interval the government of the United States, for the want of an adequate navy, was in the humiliating position of being obliged to buy peace with the Dey of Algiers at a cost of very nearly a million of dollars, a sum which would have been quite sufficient to have kept this barbarian's port hermetically sealed until he would have humbly sued for peace, had this blackmailing amount been expended previously in building suitable vessels of war. The result of this success on the part of Algiers was a declaration of war against the United States by the Bashaw of Tripoli. The result of the war with Tripoli was the assemblage of our greatest force off the coast of the Bashaw's dominions, five frigates, a brig, three schooners, and a dozen or more gunboats of that date. This, our earliest and most important display of sea power, was followed by the establishment of peace on our own terms, which included a ransom of \$60,000 and an agreement to never again trouble American commerce.

In this connection, General Washington said to both houses of Congress in 1798: "To an active and external commerce the protection of a naval force is indispensable. To secure respect to a national flag requires a force organized and ready to defend it from insult and aggression."

*Third.*—The War of 1812-13, when certainly the reputation of the navy of the United States and of American sailors became world wide.

*Fourth.*—The Mexican War, and then the Civil War, in succession. It is unnecessary to go into details now as regards the part performed by the navy in the successful termination of these wars as it is all a part of the country's history. Suffice it to say that it all goes to emphasize the importance of maintaining an adequate navy.

*Fifth.*—The rehabilitation of the navy and the change from what was called the old navy to the new, from wooden ships and sails, to steel hulls, high-powered engines, and correspondingly modern guns.

*Sixth.*—The Spanish War. This short and conclusive war demonstrated the importance of a navy. Fortunately we were prepared for it with modern ships and guns. Without an efficient navy no one can say what might have been the result.

Mahan, who is accepted as an established authority on sea

power, says that the "navy is the indispensable instrument by which, when emergencies arise, the nation can project its power beyond its own shore line."

From what has previously been stated it seems obvious that an adequate navy has always been indispensable, even when this country was a compact continent, with no outlying possessions and little probability of foreign entanglements. The map of the world, as well as its history, has made rapid changes possibly unanticipated during the last decade, at least.

We now find ourselves with valuable colonial possessions in the East Indies, in the West Indies, and in the Pacific Ocean; on the Isthmus of Panama building a canal; while the Monroe doctrine is being maintained more positively than ever. What do these changes involve? The most conservative observer must, I think, admit not only that a navy but a powerful one is absolutely necessary to maintain our position among the powers of the world. There is to-day a rivalry among the maritime nations of the world in the maintenance of sea power, and the building lists of each are closely scrutinized from year to year by each nation concerned. To maintain our prestige we must be equal to the best and no longer be regarded as a fifth-rate naval power.

It must be kept in mind, moreover, that all this involves, in connection with the force afloat, coaling stations, fortified bases, cable communications, colliers, supply ships and the other necessary auxiliaries of the fleet.

In all our new possessions we fortunately possess fine harbors naturally adapted for naval bases, except perhaps in Porto Rico, where this may not be important, as we have the fine harbor of Guantanamo excellently situated on the south coast of Cuba near the Mona passage.

The present war in the East, being waged possibly at the present moment in the vicinity of our own possessions, has certainly been an impressive illustration of the importance of sea power. Referring again to words of General Washington, it is apparent that a maritime nation at peace needs an adequate navy to maintain its dignity and its neutrality.

Avoidance of war by preparedness for it, is the principle that underlies the great expenditures for maintenance of a fleet. I have served through two wars and have witnessed the hurried prepara-

tions at enormous expense, the purchase of vessels illy adapted, but the best obtainable, at exorbitant prices. At the beginning of the war with Spain I was detailed by the Navy Department for the duty of purchasing auxiliaries for the fleet, and it will be remembered how quickly the emergency fund of \$50,000,000 was expended. The expense of a great war is indefinite; it may cost all that a nation has and all that its credit will permit it to borrow. To avoid such a calamity by being prepared to maintain peace involves an expenditure that is calculable and comparatively moderate, or to quote the words of the present German Emperor in a recent speech at Bremen: "After much has been done internally in a military way, the next thing must be the arming of ourselves at sea. Every German battleship is a guarantee for the peace of the world, and the less ready will be our foes to attack us, and the more valuable will we become as an ally."

Now, conceding that we should have a navy commensurate with the standing of the United States as a world power, it must be remembered that it takes at least three years to build a battleship costing \$7,000,000, and that each of these ships of the first-class requires about six hundred men so skilled and trained as to be able to use this material to the best advantage. The other and less important vessels to compose the fleet require time proportionately to the size and cost.

Much discussion has arisen regarding the value of expensive battleships as the best type of vessel for offensive and defensive purposes, but the professional opinion appears to be universal that a nation's maritime strength is measured by the number of first-class battleships that can be assembled at short notice. As an exemplification of this we hear continually the question how many battleships has this or that power, referring to the strength of the fleet, always assuming that the fleet is composed also of a proportionate number of other types, armored cruisers, destroyers, torpedo boats and the usual auxiliaries.

We come now to the great question: To what extent should the navy of the United States be increased? In general this will be governed by the policy of this government and the sentiment of the American people. At the present time every indication points to the fact that public sentiment calls for an increase of the navy to the extent that it shall be put on a fair footing with other powers.

My personal observations and conversations in various parts of the country confirm me in this belief.

It has been suggested that naval officers cannot be unbiased judges regarding the proper development of the navy, on account of their direct interest in this connection. Consequently, the general inclination now, I think, among the leading officers, is to be conservative for fear of being misunderstood and classed as alarmists.

Returning to the fact that we must be, as other great powers, guided to a great extent in our naval development by the building program of other powers, we find that statements have been made, and in the public prints, that the United States has built as many battleships during the period from 1891 to the present time as any other nation. This is entirely erroneous. We have at the present time twenty-seven battleships in commission, building and appropriated for. These have been provided since 1891. During the same period of fourteen years England has provided fifty-two battleships that are contemporary with our twenty-seven. Germany has provided twenty-four battleships of ten thousand tons and over since 1891; has reconstructed or rearmed four of these, and has reconstructed thirteen other battleships of less than ten thousand tons, or thirty-seven battleships in all; and in addition to this the German program, which is consistently pursued from year to year, provides for replacing seventeen battleships, all of less than eleven thousand tons displacement, with eighteen new ones of large tonnage by the year 1917, or, in other words, for a fleet of thirty-eight battleships. This is not all, however. The public prints bring also the intelligence that this program is to be supplemented by another that will nearly double the fighting strength of the German navy within ten years, and it is understood that the opposition to this, which was very strong at one time, has now practically disappeared.

France, which up to a few years ago made a great specialty of torpedo vessels of all descriptions, has, within the last year, come to the conclusion that she must have a powerful fleet of battleships and her program provides for large additions to the fleet in this line, the lessons of the present war in progress having fully convinced her that battleships are the bone and sinews of the navy.

Our own situation is such that we have entered upon an entirely new class of foreign relations since the Spanish War. We have started an isthmian canal; we have assumed a definite position and

policy in the West Indies; we have reiterated our endorsement of the Monroe doctrine; we have taken the Hawaiian Islands and Guam as vantage points on the great highway that our commerce will cross—the Pacific; we hold the Philippines, and must continue to hold them, whether we like it or not; we have stated that the open door policy shall exist in China; and over and above all we have home shores of enormous extent, greater than that of any other nation, whose first line of defense must always be the fleet. It is not too much, therefore, to assume that the strength of our fleet must grow in proportion to the importance of our international position. Just what that strength shall be should remain to be fixed by our best informed naval opinion, giving due consideration to the attitude of foreign governments and the growth of their navies, as well as to our own financial condition; and considering what is being done at the present time abroad, it would hardly be too much to state that our battle strength should consist of a fleet in the Atlantic sufficiently powerful to meet the strongest fleet that an enemy can send to our shores; one of moderate strength in the Pacific, and another of a little more strength in Asiatic waters. To maintain such a fleet requires a reserve, the strength of which cannot be accurately forecast, but it would possibly be about 25 per cent. of the force in commission. Now, therefore, it would seem in my individual opinion that the number should not be far from one battleship for each state.

Hand in hand with the construction of the fleet should go the provision for officers and men to man them, and one of the greatest needs of the present day is the recognition of the necessity of providing the personnel when the ships are appropriated for. If this were done there would not be so much disjointed action; provision made in one year for a certain number of ships, followed by begging requests year after year from the Navy Department to Congress for the officers and men to man them; this followed again, in turn, by an awakening in Congress as to the true situation of affairs and the flooding of the Naval Academy with a large number of midshipmen. This large increase of personnel is again followed in after years by a block in promotion, due to the fact that the officers formed by these large classes are nearly of the same age, and, filling the lists from admirals down through the command grades, stagnation ensues with all its attendant dangers,—dangers that are very real.

They exist to-day and are due to the fact that officers spend the largest part of their service in the grades below command ranks, where they arrive at a late age without experience in command and with very little enthusiasm for it. Flag rank follows with usually less than two years to serve. As the result of this disjointed system of providing for the navy we find our ships commanded by officers with little or no command experience, and flag officers proceed in succession to the retired list with a few months' experience in squadron or fleet command, the chief result of which is, most often, the personal satisfaction of the flag officer that his flag has been shown and saluted.

My opportunities for a study of this subject, in view of the short notice, have been too limited to undertake a precise statement in detail. Eliminating all vessels of the experimental type and those of doubtful utility, it is my opinion that the increase of the navy should be steady and systematic; that a force of forty-five first-class battleships, twenty armored cruisers and a corresponding number of gunboats, torpedo boat destroyers and colliers and auxiliaries should be borne on the navy list with a corresponding personnel of the highest efficiency. Only a portion of this fleet need be kept actually in commission, the rest being held in reserve with a reduced complement in readiness for any emergency.

The present enlisted force of the navy is 34,000. After July 1st the authorized increase will make a total of 37,000 men. A careful estimate of the force required, recently made in the Navy Department and furnished for my information, shows that there should be at least an addition of 10 per cent. in the number allowed under training, and an allowance of 5 per cent. for men waiting assignment, or in transit and in hospital. In addition to the 53,364 required to place in commission all serviceable vessels, together with the ships to be completed June 30, 1908, an additional number of men will be required at naval stations and on board receiving ships. Our navy will require at least a total of 62,368 enlisted men. The marine corps, which has always been considered as a part of our navy and whose history speaks for itself, now consists of 7,532. After July, 1905, it will contain 8,771 men and 278 officers.

I will not undertake to present here in exact figures the increase of the force that will become necessary for the manning of the fleet proposed. This will be merely a matter of calculation based on the complements of the ships.